



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Lava Beds
National Monument

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Lava Beds National Monument News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lava Beds Hosts International Conservation Crews for Monument Projects

TULELAKE, California – A youth crew from American Conservation Experience (ACE) recently spent two weeks working on a variety of conservation and restoration projects in Lava Beds National Monument. The crew, led by Trevor Willits of Eureka, California and comprised of volunteers from the United Kingdom, Denmark, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, and South Korea, began by preparing the monument's native plant nursery for the summer and transporting 3,500 native grasses and shrubs from their winter storage at Rock Bottom Ranch and Nursery in Bonanza, Oregon. After receiving the plants, the crew transplanted the first 500 grasses, shrubs, and trees in the Indian Well Campground and at the site of an old roadbed near the monument's administrative area. These native plantings will make these areas more visually appealing for visitors and the young tree seedlings will provide shade in campsites. Planting seedlings gives native species an advantage over often more aggressive exotic plant species, which is important because native plants provide higher quality habitat and forage for wildlife.

A major project for the crew of six men and five women was the removal of old fencing from atop Gillem Bluff. The crew spent two days cutting wire off posts, rolling it up, and carrying it off the bluff for recycling. The abandoned 10 foot tall fence was part of an unsuccessful interagency project to reintroduce bighorn sheep to the area in the late 1970s. Removal of the structure will provide unhindered movement for wildlife and unimpeded views for visitors atop this prominent location. Removal of the fence on National Park Service (NPS) land will continue over the course of the summer and fall, and the monument will utilize another ACE crew to finish the project in the fall.

The ACE crew also assisted with waste management in the monument by transferring compost from individual bins located around the monuments' administrative and housing areas to a large central container near the native plant nursery. Crew members sorted, chopped, and watered the compost to assist in the breakdown process. Lava Beds participates in the NPS Climate Friendly Parks Program with the goal of reducing carbon emissions. Waste reduction through composting is a key component of that plan by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Cave cleaning is an ongoing project that yields significant amounts of trash from developed caves. The ACE crew spent several afternoons collecting trash from Valentine and Skull caves and from the road between the Skull and Big Painted Cave trailheads. Trash, particularly food items like sunflower seed shells, can dramatically alter nutrient-poor cave ecosystems, and therefore the monument makes a significant effort to search and remove these items.

It wasn't all work and no play. The crew learned about the Modoc War during a tour of Captain Jack's Stronghold, and went on a ranger-led tour of Hercules Leg and Juniper caves. Park staff enjoyed the opportunity to mingle and share different cultures during potluck meals. Most of the crew members spent evenings exploring as many of the monuments' lava tube caves as possible.

ACE is a national non-profit organization that recruits, coordinates, and trains AmeriCorps members and international and American volunteers to undertake practical environmental restoration projects in national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, and other public lands.

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Lava Beds National Monument, established in 1925, is a land of turmoil, both geologic and historic. Over the last half-million years, volcanic eruptions have created a rugged landscape dotted with diverse volcanic features. Lava tube caves, Native American sites, historic battlefields and a high desert wilderness experience await you!

For more information about visiting Lava Beds National Monument, call 530-667-8113, email labe_interpretation@nps.gov, or go to www.nps.gov/labe. Also, visit the park's Facebook and Twitter pages.

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